(c) whether representations have been made to relax rules, as there is human aspect to the problem and to so-called encroachement is actually farming and forest-based activities, carried out by tribal and other backward people for ages, in harmony with nature; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) In compliance of the orders of the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Environment and Forests have issued directions to the various State/UT Governments to evict the ineligible encroachers from the forest land.

(b) Occupation of forest land in violation of Indian Forest Act, 1927 and other State Acts and Rules for the time being in force, is the determining factor for encroachements. Further, the records of the encroachment, eviction and number of affected families are maintained by the State Governments.

(c) and (d) The Ministry has recently received few such representations. In this regard, it may be mentioned that there is no change in the policy of the Central Government with regard to regularization of pre-1980 eligible encroachments and the commitment with reference to Forest-Tribal interface on the disputed settlement claims. In respect of disputed claims of eligible encroachments of the tribals for want of first offence report/ non-settlement of rights etc., directions have been issued to the States that they may consider setting up of Commissions/Committees at the level of District involving Revenue, Forest and Tribal Welfare Departments for their settlement provided other conditions are fulfilled. Further, the States have been directed that in such identified cases, the States should submit their proposals to the Central Government so that final decision can be taken in a time bound manner.

Environment action plan for Bangalore

3172. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal for rehabilitation of existing trunk sewers, civil structure and electrical metallic installations, etc. in Bangalore at a cost of Rs. 49.50 crores, has been submitted to Government;

(b) if so, the present stage of consideration of the proposal; and

(c) by when the sanction of funds to the Karnataka Government is expected?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) A proposal for rehabilitation of trunk sewers of Bangalore submitted by the Government of Karnataka was approved for an amount of Rs. 46.27 crore in August, 2002. The project is to be implemented on cost sharing in the ratio of 70:30 between the Central and State Governments. An amount of Rs. 8 crore towards the first installment of Central share has already been released to the State Government for implementation of the project.

Species of plants and animals

†3173. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of species and sub-species of plants and wild animals in the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that smuggling of body parts of wild animals is the second largest, next to smuggling of narcotic drugs, and the killings of wild animals and smuggling of their body parts is still continuing, despite existing laws and restrictions;

(c) if so, whether Government are contemplating to enact strict laws to protect the extincting wild life and plants and to stop their smuggling; and

(d) if not, in what manner protection of wild animals and plants would be ensured?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) As per available record, it is estimated that there are nearly 48,000 plants species and 81,000 animal species in the country.

(b) and (c) Illegal trade in wildlife, their parts and products is clandestine in nature and is said to be next to smuggling of Narcotic drugs. Seizure of wildlife, its products and derivatives and investigations from time to time, indicate that illegal trade continues. Government has introduced Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2002, enhancing the penalties

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.